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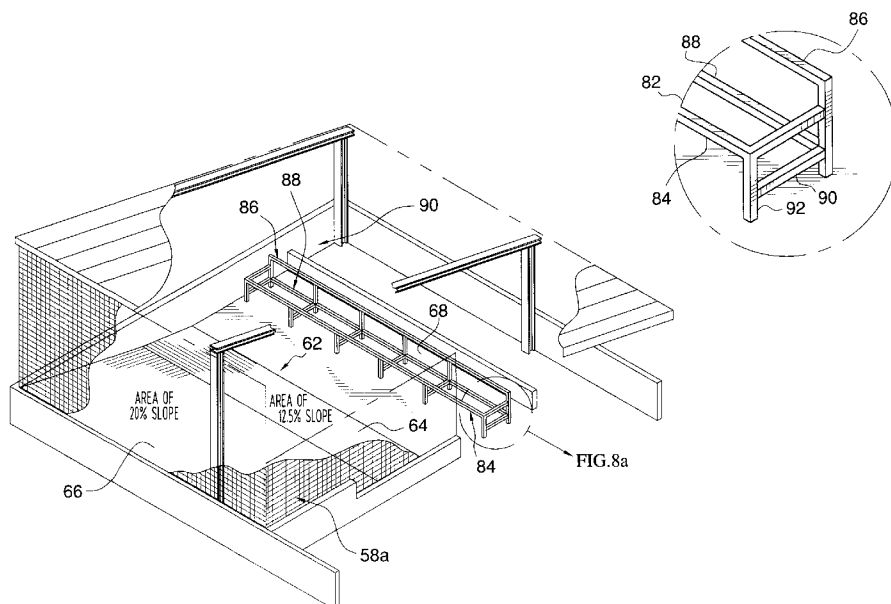
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An educational golf facility is provided in accordance with the present invention. The facility includes a target chipping zone, at least one inclined chipping/putting lane and a putting zone. The chipping/putting facility includes an extended surface having a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball. The facility further includes an inclined surface extending from the striking area. The inclined surface has long strand oriented such that balls struck up the inclined surface are caught and returned to the student; The striking area which includes an enclosure protecting students in the vicinity of the striking area. The enclosure includes a forward horizontal bar and a rear horizontal bar, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned to control the permissible back swing of a student utilizing the chipping/putting facility and the rear horizontal bar provides a safety area.

15 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



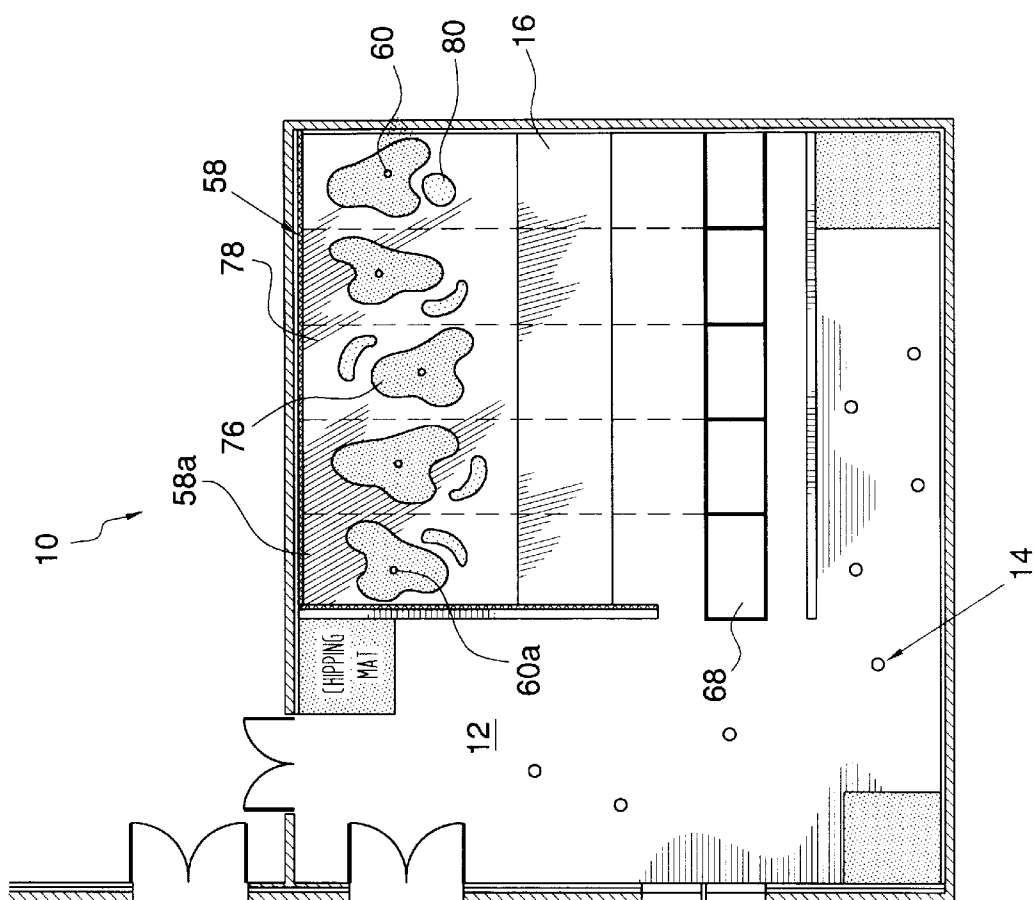


FIG. 1

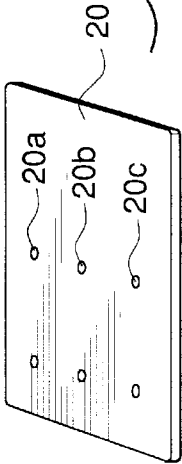
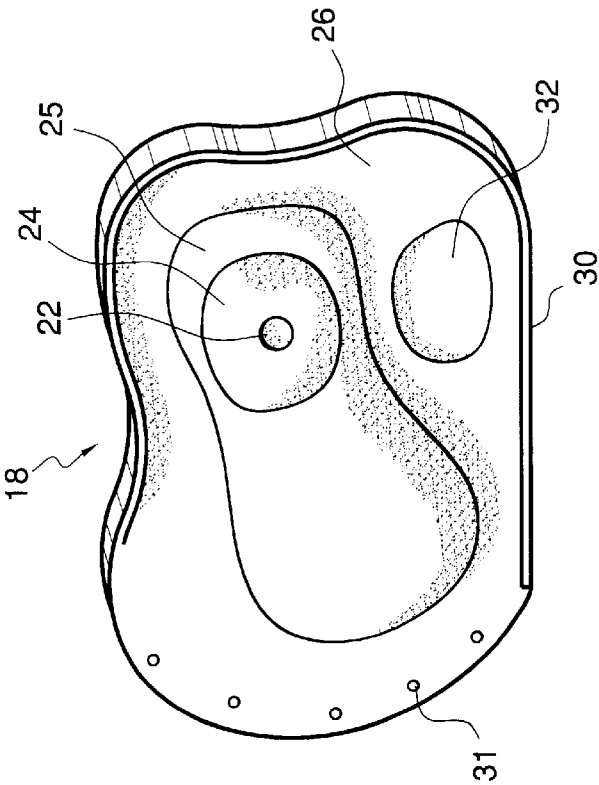



FIG. 2





FIG. 3

FIG.4

SCORECARD

<div><div>Stick to Golf</div><div></div></div>	Player 1	Player 2		Player 3	Player 4
Yards	Par	<i>Sue</i>	Hole#		
382	4	②	1		
395	4		2		
342	4		1		
122	3		4		
465	5		5		
363	4		6		
150	3		7		
379	4		8		
423	4		9		
3021	35		OUT		
450	5		10		
415	4		11		
320	4		12		
366	4		13		
290	4		14		
164	3		15		
496	5		16		
398	4		17		
346	4		18		
3245	37		IN		
6266	72		TOTAL		

SCORING SYMBOLS:

EAGLE -2		BIRDIE -1		BOGEY +1		DOUBLE BOGEY +2	
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SCORECARD SYMBOLS

Example:

PAR 5 HOLE

FIG.5

EAGLE..... ③ -2
BIRDIE..... ④ -1
PAR..... 0
BOGEY..... ⑥ +1
DOUBLE BOGEY... ⑦ +2

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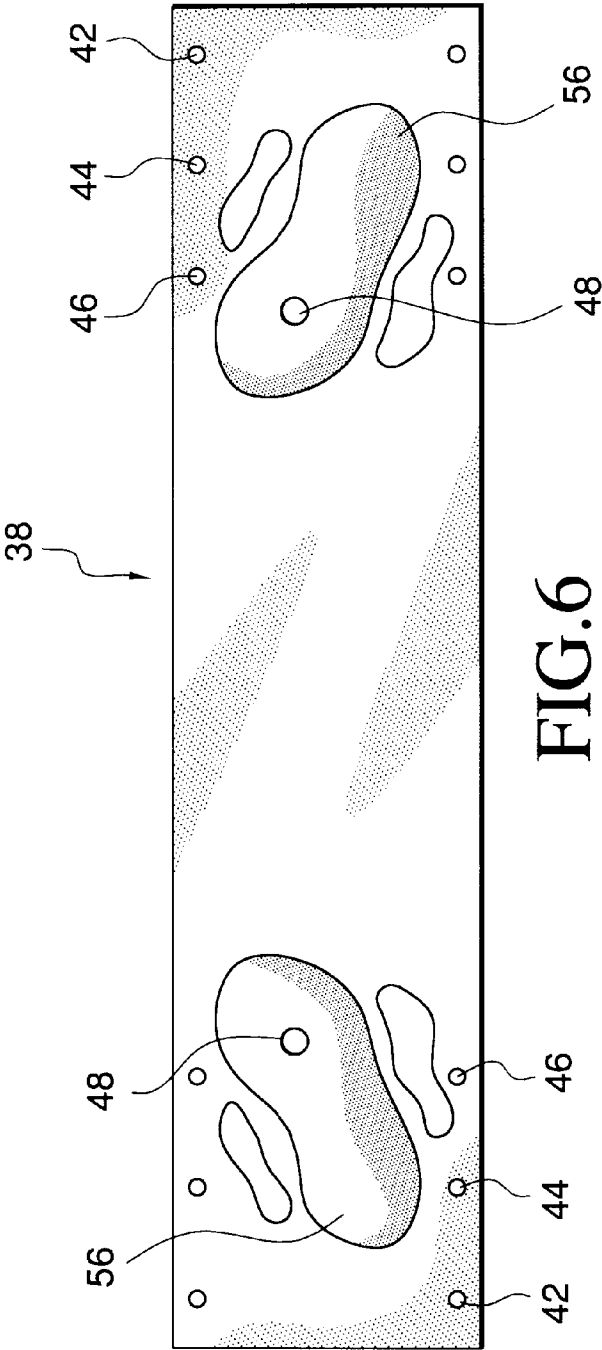


FIG. 6

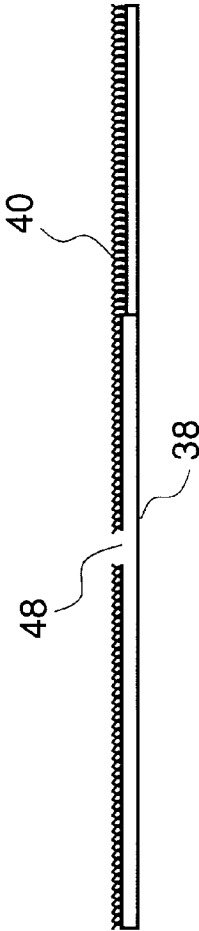


FIG. 7

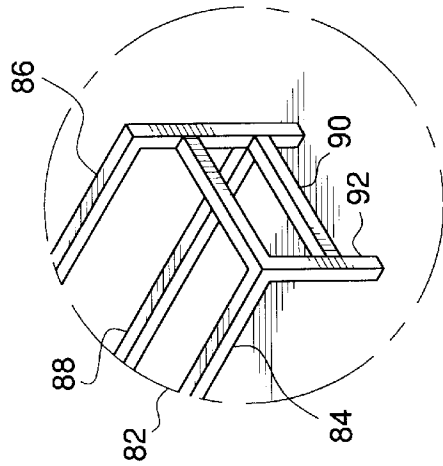


FIG. 8a

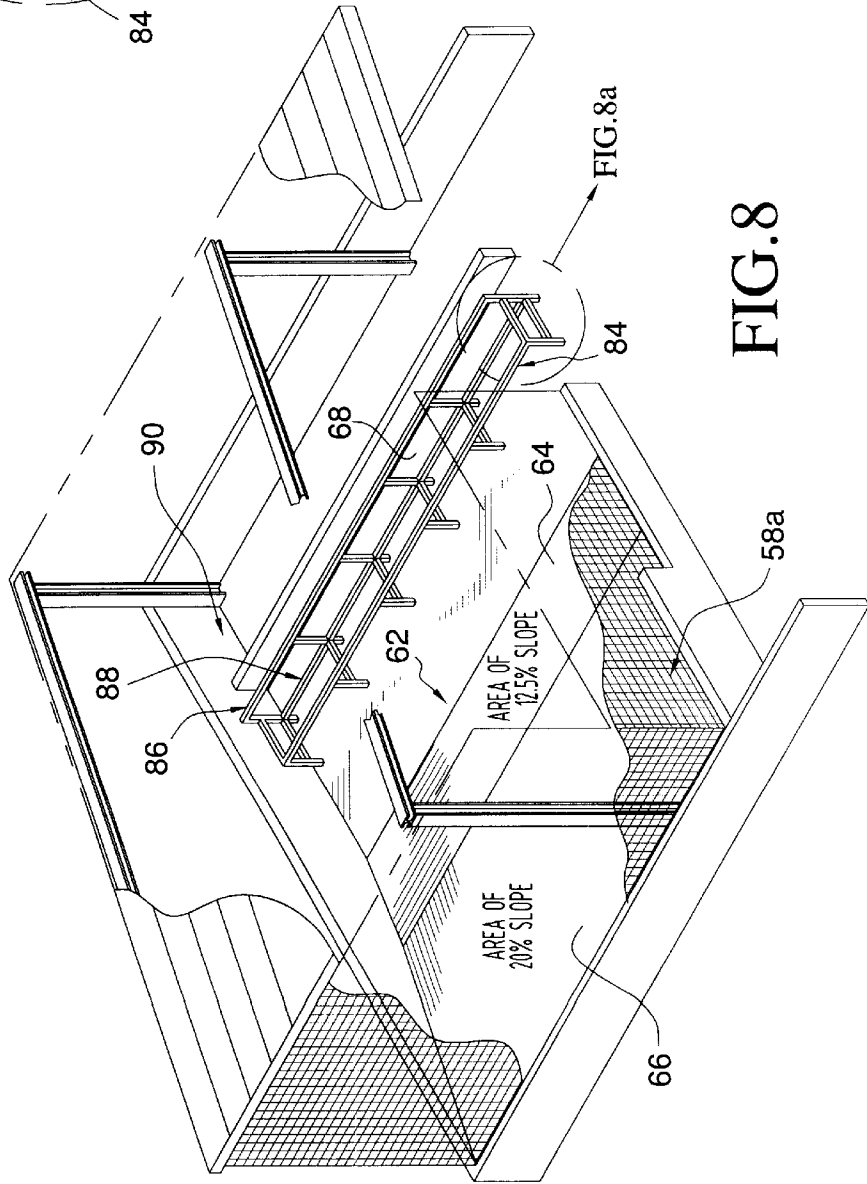


FIG. 8

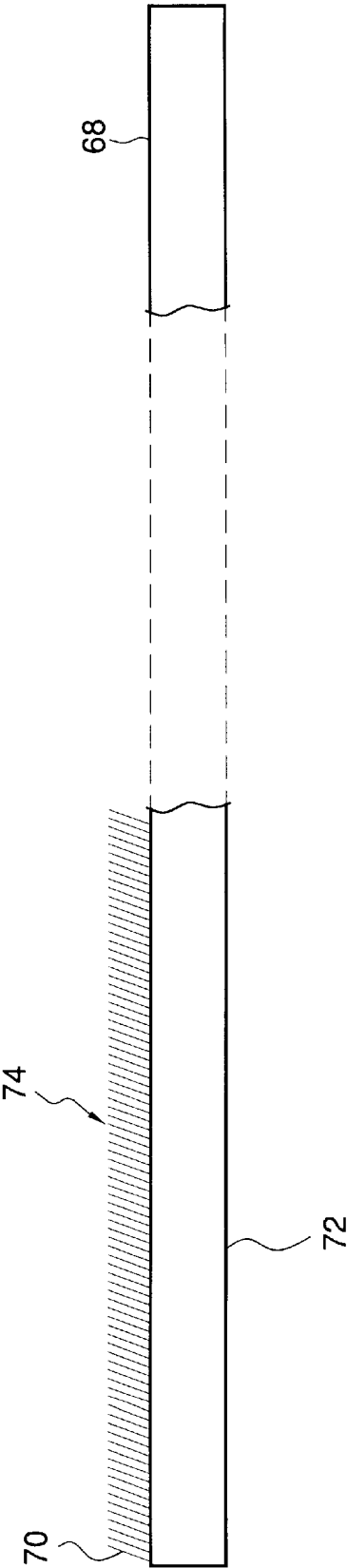
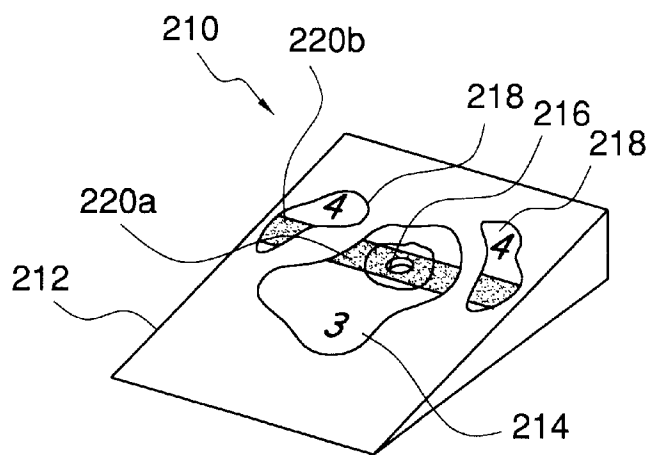
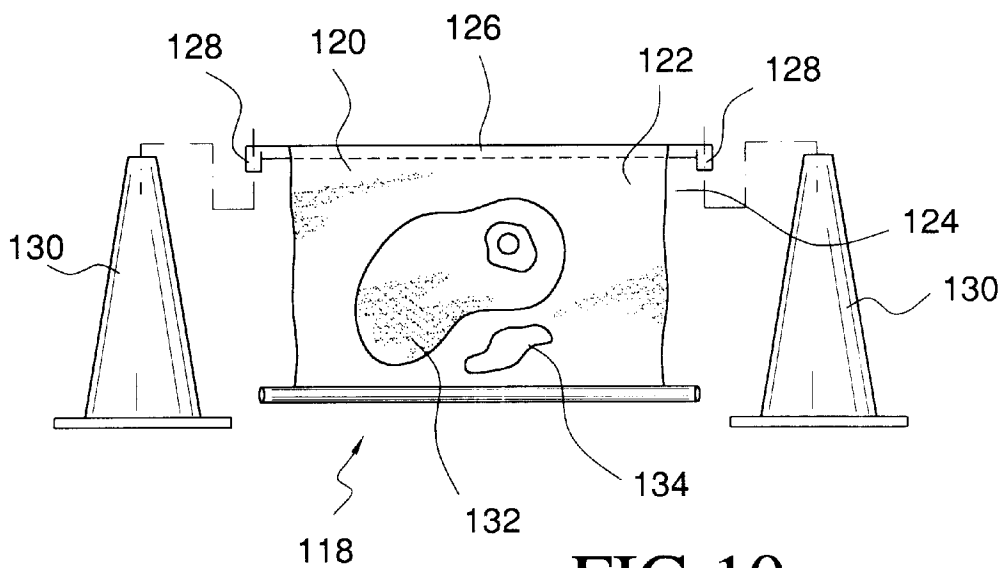


FIG.9



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**SYSTEM AND FACILITY FOR EDUCATING
STUDENTS CONCERNING THE GAME OF
GOLF**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The invention relates to an educational golf system. More particularly, the invention relates to an educational golf system incorporating a series of stations training students in various aspects of the game of golf.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The game of golf has increased in popularity tremendously over the past ten years. However, most children are still not exposed to the game of golf, unless a parent undertakes to teach a child the game.

Schools attempt to expose children to the golf, but are generally limited to permitting children to swing a golf club and possibly hit a few wiffle balls around the playing field. Even when schools attempt to teach children at this very minimal level, the mere fact that one child is swinging a club presents a serious hazard. As such, and in view of the minimal benefit obtained from such an unstructured teaching environment, most schools have never added, or removed after trying, golf from the physical education curriculum.

As such, those individuals who enjoy the game of golf and those educators appreciating the educational value associated with teaching the game of golf desire a system and facility which may be used to teach students the game of golf in a controlled and enjoyable environment. The present invention provides such a system and facility.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide an educational golf facility including a target chipping zone, at least one inclined chipping/putting lane and a putting zone.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide a chipping/putting facility. The chipping/putting facility includes an extended surface having a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball. The facility further includes an inclined surface extending from the striking area. The inclined surface is oriented such that balls struck up the inclined surface return to the student standing in the striking area.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a chipping/putting facility having a striking area which includes an enclosure protecting students in the vicinity of the striking area. The enclosure includes a forward horizontal bar and a rear horizontal bar, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned to control the permissible back swing of a student utilizing the chipping/putting facility and the rear horizontal bar is positioned to keep other students from getting too close to those students using the chipping putting facility.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a system for teaching students the game of golf. The system includes a plurality of stations where students may perform different golf shots. Each station includes targets associated with preassigned scores directly related to traditional scoring techniques used in the game of golf. The system also includes the use of score cards upon which student write scores awarded as they participate at the plurality of stations.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description

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when viewed in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which set forth certain embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic of the present educational golf facility.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the portable textured target in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a side view of the portable textured target in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a score card used in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a chart showing the traditional scoring and symbols used in the game of golf.

FIG. 6 is a top view of the putting zone in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a side view of a putting surface in accordance with present invention.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the chipping/putting lanes.

FIG. 8a is a detailed view of the enclosure used in conjunction with the chipping/putting lanes.

FIG. 9 is a cross sectional view of the turf used with the chipping putting lanes.

FIG. 10 is an alternate embodiment of a target in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 11 is an alternate embodiment of a ramp type educational device in accordance with the present invention.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED
EMBODIMENTS**

The detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein. It should be understood, however, that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, the details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limited, but merely as the basis for the claims and as a basis for teaching one skilled in the art how to make and/or use the invention.

With reference to FIG. 1, a multipurpose educational golf facility 10 is disclosed. The educational golf facility 10 is intended for use at schools, and other education facilities, by building the educational golf facility 10 within the school building or constructing a separate facility adjacent the school. While it is contemplated that the educational golf facility should be maintained at a fixed location, those skilled in the art will appreciate the possibility of constructing each of the training components discussed below as a portable structure which may be moved from location to location without substantial difficulty.

The educational golf facility 10 is generally composed of a target chipping zone 12, putting zone 14 and inclined chipping/putting lanes 16. With reference to FIGS. 2 and 3, the target chipping zone 12 generally includes a portable textured target 18 at which the student may chip a golf ball from a mat 20 in an effort to develop the skills necessary to effectively learn a "short game", that is, short distance shots generally performed in the vicinity of a golf green. The mat 20 is marked with tee markers 20a, 20b, 20c similar to those found upon a conventional golf course. The portable textured target 18 is supported vertically by a leg 26 secured to the back thereof.

The portable textured target 18 includes a central hole 22, have a closed end wall 23, into which a student attempts to

chip a golf ball. The central hole **22** is preferably 4 inches, although those skilled in the art will appreciate the various hole sizes which may be used based upon the skill level of the students using the portable textured target **18**. Immediately surrounding the central hole **22** is a first ring **24** immediately surrounding the hole section and a first section **25** replicating a putting green. A second section **26** replicating the fringe around a putting green surrounds the first section **25**. The second section **26** may be provided with a water hazard boundary **30**, out of bounds stakes **31** and sand traps **32** to lend an element of the reality to the portable textured target **18**.

Use of the portable textured target **18** is facilitated by covering the closed end wall **23** of the hole **22**, the first ring **24**, the first section **25** and the second section **26** with Velcro, hook and loop, fastening material **34a**, **34b** and using a golf ball provided with a surface adapted to "stick" to the Velcro surface. In this way, the chipped ball will stick to the portable textured target **18** allowing students to readily determine the position at which it struck the portable textured target **18**.

In addition to the physical training provided by the present portable textured target **18**, students learn the scoring elements of golf by using the portable textured target **18** in conjunction with a scoring system and score sheet **36** (see FIG. 4). Specifically, students are provided with a score sheet **36** on which to keep score as they chip at the portable textured target **18**. Before beginning use of the portable textured target **18**, students are taught (with reference to the chart shown in FIG. 5) that an eagle means two under par, a birdie means one under par, a par indicates a score allotted for the hole, a bogey indicates a score of one over par, and a double bogey indicates a score of two over par. Students are then instructed that chipping the ball into the hole **22** is an eagle, chipping the ball so it sticks to within the first ring **24** is a birdie, chipping the ball so it sticks within the first section **25** scores a par, chipping the ball so it sticks to the second section (including the sand trap **32**) **26** scores a bogey and missing the target **18** entirely scores a double bogey.

Armed with this information, students use the portable textured target **18** while marking their score each time they chip. For example, and with reference to FIGS. 4 and 5, if Sue chips it through the hole **22** the first time, an eagle would be scored on the first hole; that is, since the first hole is a par four, the student would be required to write a two with the eagle symbol indicating that an eagle had been scored on the hole. Scoring proceeds in a similar manner for as many "holes" as the students are required to "play".

An alternate embodiment of a portable textured target **118** is disclosed in FIG. 10. This alternate embodiment is generally composed of a flexible sheet **120** of material having a Velcro, hook and loop type, material on a contact side **122** thereof. The material of the flexible sheet **120** may be either the hook or loop type material so long as the ball used in conjunction with the disclosed portable textured target cooperates with the chosen material to "stick" thereto when struck by a student.

The upper end **124** of the portable textured target **118** includes a relatively stiff support member **126** with end tabs **128** secured to opposite ends thereof. The end tabs **128** are shaped and dimensioned for positioning within the top portion of conventional cones **130**. In this way, the portable textured target **118** may be readily unrolled, secured across a pair of cones **130**, utilized by students and conveniently returned to a storage room after the class is over.

The portable textured target **118** is provided with a putting green design **132** with associated hazards, for example, a sand trap **134**. As such, student using the present portable textured target keep score in the same manner described above with reference to FIGS. 2 and 3.

As mentioned above, the present educational golf facility **10** is further provide with a putting zone **14**. The putting zone **14** generally consists of putting carpet **38** formed of synthetic grass **40** having various golf elements and indicia formed thereon. These elements and indicia are repeated on opposite ends of the putting carpet **38**. With reference to FIGS. 6 and 7, each end of the putting carpet **38** includes three tee markers **42**, **44**, **46** and a hole **48**. These are indicative of tee markers commonly found on conventional golf courses and generally relate to the "Championship Tees" **42**, "Traditional Tees" **44**, and "Women's Tees" **46**.

Using these indicia, students practice putting while also learning the rules and traditions of golf. For example, the students first decide whether they will be playing from the "Championship Tees" **42**, "Traditional Tees" **44**, and "Women's Tees" **46**. Once they begin putting, scoring is performed in much the same manner as discussed above with regard to the target chipping zone **12**. A birdie is awarded where the ball comes to rest in the hole **48**, a par is awarded where the ball comes to rest within the putting green boundary **56** (a ball touching a part of the putting green boundary **56** is considered to be a par), a bogey is awarded where the ball comes to rest any place on the putting carpet **38** surface outside of the putting green boundary **56** and a double bogey is awarded if the ball rolls off the putting carpet **38** surface.

Controlled putting is further enhanced by providing a putting hole **48** have a defined depth. The defined depth is intended to teach students that putts should be struck with a speed such that they will pass approximately 15 inches past the hole **48**. If a ball reaches the hole at such a speed, the ball will stop within the hole **48**. If, however, the ball is moving faster than desired, the ball will pass through the hole **48** and come to rest somewhere behind the hole **48**. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the hole **48** is formed with a depth of approximately ½ inch.

As with the target chipping zone **12**, the putting zone **14** provides students with an opportunity to develop their physical skills while also learning the rules of golf.

Further to the putting zone **14** and the target chipping zone **12**, the present educational golf facility is provided with chipping/putting lanes **16**. Referring to FIGS. 1, 8 and 8a, the chipping/putting lanes **16** generally include a plurality of lanes **58** offering the student the chance to chip or putt at a hole **60**.

With reference to the first lane **58a**, (all the lanes **58** are substantially the same in their general physical makeup, although they may be aesthetically varied to offer different challenges to the students), the participating student faces an inclined surface **62** up which he or she is instructed to hit the golf ball at a target or hole **60**. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the inclined surface **62** is two tiered and includes a lower first tier **64** inclined at a slope of approximately a 12.5 degrees and an upper second tier **66** inclined at a slope of approximately 20 degrees. While a specific incline construction is proposed for use in accordance with the present invention, other incline structures may be used without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

With this in mind, the student may choose to pitch or putt the ball toward the hole **60a** outlined at the upper end of the lane **58a**. Since the lane **58a** is inclined up from the hitting

area 68, all balls struck toward the hole 60a will roll back to the participating student.

The return of struck balls, especially when the student is chipping, is ensured by constructing the lanes 58 of long stranded 70 artificial turf 72 with the grain 74 of the turf 72 directed toward the student (see FIG. 9). For example, and in accordance with the present invention, the turf is composed of polypropylene strands having a length of approximately 1.0 to 2.5 inches. In this way, the turf 72 "catches" the ball as it lands upon the inclined surface 62 and acts as bite or backspin. This prevents the ball from freely rolling to the top of the inclined surface 62 and permits the student to better determine where the ball is landing based upon the strength of his or her shot.

As with the putting zone 14 and target chipping zone 12, the student is told to keep score based upon a set of instructions relating to the landing point of the struck ball. For example, a ball striking the inner circle 60 will be awarded a birdie, a ball striking the marked "putting green" 76 will be awarded a par, a ball striking outside of the "putting green" 78 will be awarded a bogey, and a ball striking the water 80 or out of the lane 58 will be awarded a double bogey.

The safety of the students participating around the chipping/putting lanes is ensured by providing a safety area 68 in front of which the student stands as he or she uses the chipping/putting lanes 16. The safety area 68 is defined by an enclosure 82 consisting of a forward horizontal bar 84, upper and lower rear horizontal bars 86, 88, lateral and vertical support bars 90, 92. The arrangement of these bars prevents the student from over-swinging and striking another student. In addition, the defined striking area limits other students' access to the area immediately surrounding the student striking the golf balls, and creates a safety zone 90.

In addition to providing for the safety of the students using the present educational golf facility 10, the forward horizontal bar 84 acts to respectively control the back swing of students practicing at the chipping/putting lanes 16. By preferably providing the horizontal bar 84 at a height of approximately 36 inches, students are taught a proper chipping technique that prevents over swinging.

A further educational device which may be used by younger children (for example, kindergarten through 2nd grade) as a replacement for the ramp disclosed in FIGS. 1, 8 and 8a, is disclosed in FIG. 11. This device allows younger children to either roll (by hand) or putt a ball toward a smaller scale target. The ramp 210 disclosed in FIG. 11 generally includes a ramped support surface 212 with designs relating to a green 214, hole 216 (preferably formed in the ramp) and sand traps 218 imprinted thereon. The support surface 212 is provided with Velcro, hook and loop type, material 220a, 220b at predetermined locations thereon. The material used may be either the hook or loop type material, so long as the ball used in conjunction with the disclosed ramp cooperates with the chosen material to "stick" thereto when struck by a club or rolled by hand.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the Velcro material is secured at locations in line with the hole 220a and in the sand trap 220b. In this way, the ball will stick in these areas allowing a student to easily determine the points which should be scored. With this in mind, students putt or roll balls up the ramp, determine where the balls stop and are instructed to keep score in much the same manner as with the prior devices discussed in accordance with the present invention.

With the foregoing in mind, the present educational golf facility offers students the opportunity to both physically and mentally learn the game of golf in a controlled, student friendly environment. Students learn effective techniques for striking a golf ball, while simultaneously learning the scoring system and many of the rules integrally associated with the game of golf.

In addition, students are instructed to move around the educational golf facility in "foursomes" so as to teach another element of the game of golf. Students are also taught courtesy; for example, be considerate of other golfers by not talking, moving or standing near players as they hit, be careful, be ready when it is your turn and remember playing take turns in an orderly manner.

While the preferred embodiments have been shown and described, it will be understood that there is no intent to limit the invention by such disclosure, but rather, is intended to cover all modifications and alternate constructions falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A chipping/putting facility, comprising:

an extended surface including a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball and a surface extending from the striking area; the surface is composed of long strand artificial turf with a grain facing the striking area, the turf acting to catch a ball as it lands upon the surface.

2. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 1, further including a plurality of lanes at which multiple students may strike golf balls up the surface, wherein each lane includes a striking area and a target positioned upon the surface.

3. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 1, wherein the striking area includes an enclosure protecting students in the vicinity of the striking area.

4. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 3, wherein the enclosure includes a forward horizontal bar and a rear horizontal bar.

5. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 4, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned to control the permissible back swing of a student utilizing the chipping/putting facility and the rear horizontal bar is positioned to keep other students from getting too close to those students using the chipping putting facility.

6. A chipping/putting facility; comprising:

an extended surface including a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball and an inclined surface extending from the striking area; the inclined surface being oriented such that balls struck up the inclined surface return to the student standing in the striking area; wherein the inclined surface is composed of long strand artificial turf with a grain facing the striking area, the turf acting to catch a ball as it lands upon the inclined surface.

7. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 6, further including a plurality of lanes at which multiple students may strike golf balls up the inclined surface, wherein each lane includes a striking area and a target position upon the inclined surface.

8. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 6, wherein the striking area includes an enclosure protecting students in the vicinity of the striking area.

9. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 8, wherein the enclosure includes a forward horizontal bar and a rear horizontal bar.

10. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 9, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned to control the permissible back swing of a student utilizing the chipping/putting facility and the rear horizontal bar is positioned to keep other students from getting too close to those students using the chipping putting facility. 5

11. A chipping/putting facility, comprising:

an extended surface including a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball and a landing surface extending from the striking area; 10

the striking area adjacent to an enclosure protecting students in the vicinity of the striking area, the enclosure including a forward horizontal bar and a rear horizontal bar connected by at least one lateral support bar so as to form a unitary enclosure, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned adjacent the striking area with the striking area between the forward horizontal bar and the landing surface, the forward horizontal bar being so positioned relative the striking area to control the permissible back swing of a student utilizing the chipping/putting facility; and 15 20

the rear horizontal bar is positioned remote from the striking area with the forward horizontal bar located between the rear horizontal bar and the striking area so as to define a safety zone between the forward horizontal bar and the rear horizontal bar wherein the rear horizontal bar, in combination with the safety zone, function to keep other students from getting too close to those students using the chipping/putting facility. 25 30

12. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 11, wherein the forward horizontal bar is positioned approximately 36 inches high.

13. The chipping/putting facility according to claim 11, further including an upper rear horizontal bar positioned

above the rear horizontal bar for protecting individuals in the vicinity of the facility.

14. A system for teaching students the game of golf, comprising:

a plurality of stations where students may perform different golf shots, the plurality of stations including a target chipping zone, at least one inclined chipping/putting lane, the inclined chipping putting lane including an extended surface including a striking area in front of which a student may swing a golf club and strike a golf ball and an inclined surface extending from the striking area; the inclined surface being oriented such that balls struck up the inclined surface return to the student standing in the striking area and a putting zone;

each station including targets associated with preassigned scores directly related to traditional scoring techniques used in the game of golf; and

score cards upon which student write scores awarded as they participate at the plurality of stations;

wherein the targets are associated with scores of eagle, birdie, par and bogey determined based upon a single shot at the target, the score being subsequently be converted to a numerical score when written on the core card.

15. The system according to claim 14, wherein the putting zone includes at least one hole toward which students will putt a ball, the hole being of a depth of approximately ½ inch such that a ball having a desired speed will stop within the hole and a ball having a speed greater than the desired speed will roll through the hole.

* * * * *